

the belief of God in everyone. She also wanted to learn to still herself, as the Quakers showed her was possible, but she did not wish to be silenced. She wanted to begin again, to conduct her own search for a connection to God in every crevice where God could be found. Even after her acceptance into the Quaker faith, she pressed the boundaries by suggesting music for Quaker meetings. Music was not a common practice in Quaker meetings, and in the past, Quakers had even seemed afraid of the emotional power of music (198). Hart followed her predecessor, Catharine Seely, to learn to let go of her "one right way" idea of religion. "All are brothers and sisters, equally entitled to the Divine favor" (199).

There is tremendous longing in this text: longing to know God firsthand; longing to find the voice which wasn't the one she used to speak or sing; longing to be "free of the institution that made my faith a rote performance" (86); longing to speak what she dare not speak, expressed in a psalm she'd collected from the Old Testament: "I will open my dark saying" (84). She spoke of spirituality as "desire, longing, the cry from the bottom of the well" (150).

Even though Hart quotes Emily Dickinson who wrote in 1862: "I'm ceded . . . I've stopped being theirs," this book is not about disdaining the Mormon Church to become a much-wiser Quaker. It's about claiming one's right to speak without intermediaries. It's about the never-ending search to become one with the Divine and claim the right to ride the waves in the ocean of God. It's about becoming music where we can sing, "I am this and you are that" to sleep (219).

## Relations and Principles: The Mormon Dialectic

Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 254 pp.

*Reviewed by Matt Nagel, who teaches English at Park City High School in Utah and has a master's degree in theology from Vanderbilt University*

Douglas J. Davies offers novel thematic interpretations of LDS theology that are provocative in both academic and devotional contexts. He identifies two theological commitments present throughout the historical development of LDS cosmology, ritual, scripture and organization, namely "relations" and "principles." The "relations" theme includes Joseph Smith's contacts with divine messengers, the covenantal relationships of Latter-day Saints to each other and to God, the outward thrust of missionaries, the geographic setting of Zion, and the ritual/soteriological interest in the dead. The term "principles," or in the Mormon vernacular, "eternal principles," allows discussion of priesthood, intelligence (of

the D&C 93 variety), revelation, hierarchy, etc.; the working definition offered is “rules that controlled and governed the universe” (6).

Conceived as a dialectic, relations and principles nuance a number of LDS categories. Regarding theological anthropology: “The Mormon ‘self,’” Davies writes, “must be understood as an interplay of community and agency.” Here, community represents the relational strand while agency is an eternal principle (147). LDS ethics, too, is held as part relational and part principle. On the relational side, ultimate happiness depends upon one’s trust in family and community and the “corporate venture” of salvation. Obedience to divine imperatives constitutes the “principles” aspect of Mormon ethics: if “sins exist in the plural” (189)—that is, sin is caused by an individual’s rebellious and wilful acts rather than as the inevitable result of a “sinful” human nature—then righteousness consists in obligations to eternal law (chap. 6).

The section heading, “Church within a Church,” introduces another example of the interplay between relations and principles. This concept becomes thematic throughout the remainder of the book, contributing rich interpretive themes of its own. Here Davies describes core and peripheral members of the LDS faith, the former as temple-goers and the latter as chapel-only participants. New converts, he argues, encounter the relational aspects of the LDS faith first: missionary work, pastoral work, community, and theologies and rituals centering on salvation (again, a corporate venture). Temple initiates, contrarily, are involved in educative and liturgical expressions of principles that center on exaltation, including “hearts turning to fathers,” priesthood, cosmology, and apotheosis (132–34). Temple life is, for Davies, Mormonism’s most distinctive attribute, which becomes clear as the energy peaks in Chapter 8, “Temples and Ritual.”

The stated purpose of the book, following Davies’s self-disclosure as an “outsider,” is primarily to advance understanding of Mormonism among non-Mormons while hoping, secondarily, that Mormons themselves will “engage with the interpretation of Mormon theology offered here” (7). Davies employs numerous analogies and comparisons to Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox characteristics to convey, quite effectively, any particular Mormon circumstance. No doubt, this device facilitates the process of introduction. It is also quite effective in helping the LDS locate their beliefs within (at least near) the broader Christian continuum. Protestants, for example, derive authority from the Bible, Catholics from apostolic succession. These modes are contrasted to Mormonism’s “complex relationship between prophet and text” (64). The Christian context helps illuminate the Mormon situation for both “outsiders” and “insiders.”

Davies successfully employs this device several times in each chapter. The most helpful, inasmuch as it is significant beyond the cognitive convenience of analogy, demonstrates *similarity* between Evangelicals and Mormons that, Davies suggests, sets the two in competition. He portrays Evangelicals as having a “free-

dom from tradition" and a sense of the "immediacy of God." Then he says, "These dynamics of Evangelical spirituality guarantee a degree of hostility to Mormonism, given that both claim freedom from all false interpretations, the one through the Reformation and the immediacy of the Spirit and the other through the Restoration and the authority of the Priesthood" (240–241). This passage exemplifies the value of this "outsider" perspective for those Saints who are, as Davies wishes, willing to engage his interpretation of Mormonism.

While the scope of the book is undefined, the focus is theological. At every turn, Davies seeks theological significance in Mormon practice. From the quasi-ritual bearing of testimonies, Davies derives a relational pneumatology (179). On tithing, he says: "Money and exaltation are directly related" (183). He cites the Correlation Department as an example of prophecy and authority in concert with one another, or "the way a supernatural frame is brought to surround bureaucracy" (29). In some instances, this pattern is inverted such that he deconstructs theological commitments, as when he proffers a sociological theory for the demise of LDS glossolalia (140).

I was frustrated by the title and organization of the book. As a general introduction, per se, the book fails. It presupposes too great a familiarity with basic Mormon history. For example, in the first chapter, logically titled "The Birth and Growth of Mormonism," the reader is confronted by, not introduced to, Smith being "sealed" to "at least nine Nauvoo women," masonry, temple ordinances, Gadianton robbers, Kolob, finitistic conceptions of God, and the New Jerusalem—without any discussion of Joseph Smith's theophany, his revelatory and revisionist tendencies, or the origins of LDS scripture, all of which are told, like a joke following its own punch line, in Chapter 2. Folk magic and superstition also take a prominent, tone-setting role in the first chapter, which may annoy LDS apologists, but which is, nevertheless, appropriate since it describes the cultural setting of "The Birth and Growth of Mormonism." On the other hand, the previously mentioned litany of unexplained Mormon peculiarities can only confuse a reader seeking an "introduction to Mormonism."

Davies is largely successful in making constructive contributions to Mormon thought page after page, but this is no attempt at compiling all the historical, theological, textual, and practical gumbo that is Mormonism into the comprehensive and coherent introduction that the title suggests. Perhaps "A *Theological* Introduction to Mormonism" would have better described the actual content of the book, disabusing any expectation that it would begin, "In 1820, near Palmyra . . ."

I would not, then, suggest this book to anyone with a casual inquiry about Mormonism. But I recommend it to everyone seeking to broaden or challenge his or her conceptions of Mormon theology.